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AUTHOR	Gaines, Lisa
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ABSTRACT

This folktale unit supports 6th- through 8th-grade students' exploration of the many subgenres of folktales: trickster tales, fairy tales, fables, tall tales, and legends. The unit focuses heavily on the use of technology as a learning tool as students work together to create WebQuests for their peers to explore. During the 10 one-hour sessions, students will: discover the elements of fiction as they apply to folktales, including plot, setting, character, length, purpose, and audience; research existing WebQuests in order to understand the format as well as the style in which they are written; take ownership in their project by writing an essential question around which their WebQuest will be built; offer differentiated culminating activities; design rubrics on which the culminating activities will be graded; write the Task, Process, Evaluation, and Conclusion of their activities; research links that will help WebQuest participants reach the desired outcomes; analyze their website links based on quality, content, usability, and appearance; and design, publish, and implement their own WebQuests that center around essential questions. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. An Internet documentation form and a rubric for WebQuest building groups are attached. (RS)

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Folktale Frenzy: WebQuest Writing

Author
Lisa Gaines
Hoover, Alabama

Grade Band
6-8

Estimated Lesson Time
10 one-hour sessions

Overview

Students design WebQuests in order to teach their peers about the subgenres that fall under the heading of "folktale." Each group writes tasks that focus on answering an essential question, detailed processes with Internet links, rubrics for grading culminating project options, and a conclusion.

From Theory to Practice

WebQuests are tools that allow students to apply their learning in a new forum in which they make connections and construct meaning as involved learners. As students transfer skills from the "classroom" to "real life," they experience an intrinsic motivation for learning.

Watson, Kenneth Lee. Webquests in the Middle School
http://www.ncsu.edu/meridian/jul99/webquest/webquest2.html

WebQuests that focus on an authentic essential question—a real-life issue—are authentic tasks that carry meaning beyond classroom walls. The reasoning skills inherent in such an authentic task can be used in many aspects of the students' lives. For example, students can hypothesize about an essential question they have written and then research information that must be transformed into another product such as a comparison or contrast of varying viewpoints. This scaffold can be taken into other disciplines such as science or civics and even used introspectively to make informed decisions about life experiences.

An integral part of WebQuest research is the scaffolding of higher-level thinking skills. By requiring students to move through subtasks that break down the often complicated bigger picture, students move from concrete thought processes into abstract ones. For instance, they begin by uncovering facts and then synthesize and analyze them in order to construct meaning. From there, students evaluate what they have learned and use that knowledge to create an authentic understanding of the task at hand from a collective pool of ideas rather than from memorizing simple facts.

The World Wide Web allows students direct access to up-to-date reports, individual experts, and current databases. This resource allows students a wider range of sources from which to gather data and make informed decisions about its validity.

WebQuests for Learning
http://www.ozline.com/webquests/intro.html

Student Objectives

Students will

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- discover the elements of fiction as they apply to folktales, including plot, setting, character, length, purpose, and audience.
- research existing WebQuests in order to understand the format as well as the style in which they are written.
- take ownership in their project by writing an essential question around which their WebQuest will be built.
- offer differentiated culminating activities.
- design rubrics on which the culminating activities will be graded.
- write the Task, Process, Evaluation, and Conclusion of their activities.
- research links that will help WebQuest participants reach the desired outcomes.
- analyze their website links based on quality, content, usability, and appearance.
- design, publish, and implement their own WebQuests that center around essential questions.

Resources

- Internet Documentation Form
- WebQuest Rubric
- Hans Christian Andersen's Tales
- Example Think Quest
- Grimm's Fairy Tales
- Essential Questions Web Site
- Fifth Grade WebQuest I
- Fifth Grade WebQuest II
- Designing a Webquest
- Think Quest Library

Instructional Plan

Resources

- Computer access to the Internet
- Internet Documentation Form
- Butcher Paper

Preparation

1. This project is research based. Teach students how to fill out the Internet Documentation Form prior to beginning the project. This form will help you track your students' research. If they are completing it correctly, the form will reflect that.
2. If you have not been using essential questions all year, introduce your students to the concept and let them practice writing them. Differentiate instruction by requiring more advanced students to write essential questions that require analysis and synthesis, while allowing less-advanced students to write essential questions that are more factually based.
3. Hang six pieces of butcher paper on the wall, one for each of the subgenres of folktales students will study: trickster tales, fairy tales, fables, tall tales, and legends. (One will serve as a class model; the others will belong to the group studying that particular type of folktale.) Label each one and use them to record the components of folktales as students uncover them, including plot, setting, character, length, purpose, and audience. These visual aids will serve as inspiration and keep students focused on the aspects of folktales they will teach to others.
4. Prep the class by reading aloud at least one subgenre of folktale per day over a few days in order to provide students with base knowledge. Ask pointed questions about the content without explicitly uncovering the components that make up a folktale—you want the students to discover

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them on their own. In order to facilitate comprehension, students may fill out a plot diagram. Model one or two for students before leaving them to their own devices.

5. Form small groups of two to three students who will work together throughout the unit, and assign each group a subgenre of folktales to study. Creating integrated small groups allows each student to spotlight his or her strengths. Similarly, implementation of the lesson will be easier if at least one student in each group is relatively savvy with technology.

Instruction and Activities

1. Students, in small groups at the library, research the subgenre of folktale you have chosen as a class model. Students read and dissect the stories to uncover the components that identify a piece of literature as a specific type of folktale. (OPTION: Explore folktales published on the Internet. See Web Resources below.)
2. Each group presents its findings to the class at large. Once all groups have presented, hold a large-group discussion to determine which aspects of folktale literature you will write on the butcher paper. Have the spokesperson of each group, from which you adopt conventions, write their discovery on the paper. This helps students take ownership of their informal research. The butcher paper list is a living document that tudents can add to or take away from as they move through the unit.
3. Explain essential questions. In a large-group format, discuss the ways in which they can be linked to folktales, and model the writing of essential questions for the students. Next, students in small groups practice writing their own essential questions as they relate to the type of folktale their groups will be studying, again taking ownership of their project.
4. Have students research a variety of WebQuests outside of class to determine the style and form in which they are written. Require them to fill out the Internet Documentation Form, which will assist them in analyzing format and content.
5. Students then explain, in an expository paragraph, the outcomes they would like their peers to reach as a result of participating in the WebQuest and the ways in which these outcomes relate to the essential questions they have written. For example, one essential question might be, "In what ways does point of view affect the moral of the story?" Related outcomes might include an expository essay that uses the essential question as the thesis statement, a poster that compares and contrasts the points of view of the protagonist and antagonist, or a fairy tale that is rewritten from another character's point of view (e.g., students may retell the story of *Snow White* from the Wicked Witch's point of view.) (Direct them to the original story of the *Three Little Pigs* and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs,* by Jon Scieszka, for inspiration. Scieszka's version tells the classic from the wolf's point of view.)
6. Approve each group's outcomes. Students must then create at least two culminating projects from which their peers can choose. Rubrics must accompany these projects. Make certain that the culminating activities require synthesis of the essential questions and are aligned with the desired outcomes. Examples of culminating projects, all of which must focus on the essential question presented and the information gleaned from the WebQuest, may include

    - a puppet show
    - a dramatic recitation of an original folktale
    - a debate in talk show format
    - an expository essay
    - a videotaped commercial of an existing folktale that "sells" people on its message.

7. Students write the Task, Processes, Resources, Evaluation, and Conclusion. Each phase must go through the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revision, and peer editing. Publishing will occur on the WebQuest itself.
8. Students research Internet links that will assist their peers in arriving at educated answers to the essential questions posed. Be sure to review the links and assess their level of appropriateness.
9. Students design their WebQuests for posting on the World Wide Web.
10. Each group will then complete another group's WebQuest.
11. (Optional) Invite parents to "Folktale Frenzy" and allow them to move through their choice of WebQuests. (This is easier to handle if your school has a designated computer lab.)

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12. (Optional) Invite another teacher's class to "Folktale Frenzy."

Web Resources

Designing a Webquest
http://www.macomb.k12.mi.us/wq/WQTips.htm
This teacher-oriented site explains each of the aspects of a well-designed WebQuest: introduction, task, resources, process, learning advice, and conclusion. It is not an actual WebQuest, but an outline of the information each section should contain.
Think Quest Library
http://www.thinkquest.org/library/JR_index.html
This library was built around Web sites created by students for students. It allows students to examine Web pages that contain links to other pages and serves as a format for their own WebQuests.
Example Think Quest
http://library.thinkquest.org/3081/
Another Think Quest from the great Think Quest library. This one deals with the cultural aspects of Pow Wows. Again, it's a tool students can use to analyze the information that goes into a Think Quest. Think Quests differ from WebQuests in that they are purely used to organize research rather than centering on essential questions.
Fifth Grade WebQuest I
http://www.ccsd.net/schools/lummis/Hybarger/nativeamericanhomepage.html
An actual WebQuest created by fifth graders titled "The Ancient Ones." Great for middle schoolers too.
Fifth Grade WebQuest II
http://www.ccsd.net/schools/lummis/Hybarger/renaissance/therenaissancehomepage.html
Another WebQuest created by fifth graders, this one titled "The Renaissance."
Grimm's Fairy Tales
http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~spok/grimmtmp/" target="_blank
This site contains 209 tales by the brothers Grimm.
Hans Christian Andersen's Tales
http://hca.gilead.org.il/
This site contains over 150 of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales.
Essential Questions
http://www.biopoint.com/ibr/askquestion.html
An introduction to and examples of essential questions.

Student Assessment/Reflections

This project requires a variety of informal and formal assessments. Informally, make certain students are on track by examining

- the answers they provide about the components of folktales;
- their level of participation; and,
- direct questioning.

Formal evaluation includes

- Plot Diagrams
- Internet Documentation Forms
- Expository paragraph on the outcomes students want their peers to reach
- the writing process for the Essential Questions, Task, Processes, Evaluation, and Conclusion.

The culminating grade for the WebQuest itself can be calculated based on the WebQuest Rubric provided. [Note: Column heads are left empty so teachers can fill in either their own point system and/or their own descriptive words for each descriptor.]

NCTE/IRA Standards

3 - Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

11 - Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12 - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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Name _____

INTERNET DOCUMENTATION FORM

Use this form to record all of your Internet research. Fill out all blanks so that you do not have problems with citation later. If you are unable to fill out all blanks, please see me BEFORE you include this source on your sheet.

NOTE: Search engines are **NOT** Web sites. Google, Hotbot, Dogpile, etc., are not to be listed on this Internet Documentation Form.

Web Address: _____

Web Site Name: _____

Web Site Author: _____ Date you accessed this material: _____

Name of Search Engine that got you to this page: _____

Web Addresses of links that got you to this page:

_____

_____

Web address of specific page(s) on which you found pertinent information:

_____

_____

What kind of information did you find on this Web site? How will it help those students participating in your WebQuest? (Be specific!)

_____

_____

_____

Links this site will take you to (names and addresses):

_____

_____

_____

List the physical attributes that are attractive about this Web site: _____

_____

List something you would change about this Web site: _____

_____

Rate the ease with which you can navigate this Web site (circle one):

Easy Somewhat Easy Somewhat Difficult Difficult

List specific reasons why you circled the choice you made (at least three reasons):

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Web Address: _____

Web Site Name: _____

Web Site Author: _____ Date you accessed this material: _____

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_____

List something you would change about this Web site: _____

_____

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_____

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Name(s) _____

RUBRIC FOR WEBQUEST BUILDING GROUPS

Framework	Exhibits little or no understanding of WebQuest purpose after study	Exhibits some understanding of WebQuest purpose after study	Exhibits some working knowledge of WebQuest purpose after study	Exhibits extensive knowledge of WebQuest purpose after study
	Researches 0 WebQuests	Researches 1-4 WebQuests	Researches 5-8 WebQuests	Researches 8+ WebQuests
	Devises 0 essential questions	Devises 1 essential question	Devises 2 essential questions	Devises 2+ essential questions
	Essential questions exhibit no comprehension of their purpose	Essential questions exhibit little comprehension of their purpose	Essential questions exhibit comprehensive understanding of their purpose	Essential questions exhibit exemplary understanding of their purpose
	Essential questions do not correspond to desired outcomes of folktale unit	Essential questions somewhat correspond to desired outcomes of folktale unit	Essential questions correspond to desired outcomes of folktale unit	Essential questions correspond to desired outcomes of folktale unit and are of interest to middle-schoolers
	End result is not a valid product	End result requires student to show knowledge-level thinking skills	End result requires mid-level thinking skills	End result requires higher- level thinking skills
Writing	Mission is unappealing	Mission is somewhat appealing	Mission is appealing	Mission is appealing to middle-schoolers
	Process is unclear	Process is somewhat unclear	Process is clear	Process is completely clear
	Procedures are not detailed	Procedures are somewhat detailed	Procedures are detailed	Procedures are detailed in a manner which is easily understood
	Conclusion provides no satisfactory wrap-up	Conclusion provides minimal wrap-up	Conclusion provides satisfactory wrap-up	Conclusion provides exemplary wrap-up
Web	No Internet sites included	1-5 Internet sites included	6-11 Internet sites included	12-15 Internet sites included
	Internet sites provide no information that aids in answering the essential questions	Few of the Internet sites provide information that aids in answering the essential questions	Most of the Internet sites provide information that aids in answering the essential questions	All of the Internet sites provide information that aids in answering the essential questions
Rubric	Does not match mission, process, and/or procedures	Vaguely matches mission, process, and/or procedures	Mostly matches mission, process, and/or procedures	Completely matches mission, process, and/or procedures
WebQuest	WebQuest design is visually unappealing and not thematically related to project	WebQuest design is fairly appealing and fairly thematically related to project	WebQuest design is somewhat appealing and somewhat thematically related to project	WebQuest design is appealing and thematically related to project

Name(s) _____

WebQuest (continued)	WebQuest does not follow "Rule of Three"*	WebQuest rarely follows "Rule of Three"	WebQuest mostly follows "Rule of Three"	WebQuest always follows "Rule of Three"
*The "Rule of Three" is that no more than three clicks of the mouse are required to retrieve the desired information.				
Implementation	Instructions are unclear	Instructions are fairly clear	Instructions are mostly clear	Instructions are completely clear
	No assistance provided to students	Vague assistance provided to students	Satisfactory assistance provided to students	Comprehensive assistance provided to students
	Project not completed	Project more than one week late	Project one or more days late	Project completed on time
TOTALS				

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